

Subject of Investigation: Centinela State Prison

Justification: California State Law mandates that the Civil Grand Jury will inspect all prison and jail facilities on a yearly basis.

Background: Centinela State Prison is operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Centinela State Prison is a Level III / Level IV Institution.

Findings: Current inmate population at Centinela State Prison is 4,488 inmates. This is 1,188 inmates over capacity.

There was a disturbance/incident at Centinela State Prison on April 29, 2010, in that an inmate housed in Facility "C" allegedly assaulted a Correctional Officer. As a result, Facility "C" was on a modified program at the time of the Civil Grand Jury's inspection. This modified plan affected the movement, feeding, medical visits, work activities, dayroom activities, recreation, canteen, package deliveries, phone calls, visitations, use of the law library, and access to religious services for all Facility "C" inmates.

While present in Facility "C," members of the Civil Grand Jury observed an active cell-by-cell search. Canine officers and their handlers from an allied agency, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, were assisting personnel from the prison in searching inmates' cells. This was a useful alliance for both the search itself and for training.

Conclusion: The investigating committee of the Civil Grand Jury, working from a checklist, determined that Centinela Prison met and passed all inspection criteria and requirements.

Recommendation: The Civil Grand Jury endorses the continuing use of allied agencies, especially the use of canine units, for searches at the prison. Further, the Civil Grand Jury recommends that canine officers and their handlers should be on premises during visitations, as well as in the days immediately after visitations, as a means to curtail and prevent infiltration of drugs and other contraband into Centinela State Prison.

Response Required: The Civil Grand Jury expects consideration of these recommendations and a written response by the Centinela State Prison on or before August 30, 2010.